

Early Learning Council – QRIS Technical Assistance Committee June, 2006

Initial Key Themes Identified in Review of QRIS Provider Forum Surveys

Introduction

The Child Care Survey for Parents is a survey that was sent out via the Early Learning Council and interested parties, the QRIS Technical Advisory Committee, Child Care Resource & Referral, Washington Association for the Education of Young Children, Schools Out Washington, Washington State Family Child Care Association, and Culturally Specific Task Forces. The qualitative survey was available in English and in Spanish, with slightly different versions for family and center providers. Both versions asked open-ended questions about providers' location, perceived role of QRIS in improving care, concerns and fears about QRIS implementation, and potential benefits of QRIS.

Limitations: Given limited time and staffing resources, this is a "broad brush" list of issues raised in 2006 QRIS Provider Forums run throughout the state in response to open-ended questions in group discussions and written surveys. These include comments conveners submitted on surveys from the respective forums. A more detailed analysis will be completed in July.

Participants. In all, **264** surveys representing at least **30** separate provider forums were reviewed, **117** from family providers and **110** from combinations of care types frequently identified as centers, but also including Head Start, Early Head Start, ECEAP, and School Age programs. These surveys included at least **12** providers who identified themselves as speaking Spanish. The collection of additional provider surveys is ongoing and in-depth analyses need to be conducted in the future. Geographic areas represented include: Thurston, Grant, Adams, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Spokane, Kitsap, King, Skagit, Clallam, Jefferson, Clark, Snohomish, Klickitat, Pierce, Grays Harbor, Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, and San Juan Counties, as well as eight Washington Tribal Child Care Programs.

Methodology. To quantify the types of responses received while capturing the nature of responses, responses to three questions common to both family providers and child care center providers were categorized according to themes present throughout.

Main findings

The first question asked providers, **"How can the QRIS help you to improve the care you provide?"** A total of at least **11** separate themes emerged including: training; tiered reimbursements; funding; recruitment and retention; support; public awareness; improved quality of care and child outcomes; parent education; and increased professionalism.

Providers were asked, **"What concerns and fears do you have about the QRIS?"** in the second question. A total of **18** distinct themes emerged. Many of these topics echoed themes present throughout responses to the first question (regarding improvement). For example, providers were concerned about whether there would be adequate funding to buttress and sustain the quality initiatives and supports proposed. Unfair or inconsistent delivery of supports

Comment [ep1]: Rene: I don't have the font you used and can't seem to copy and paste the necessary codes to get this line to conform. Could you please edit accordingly? THANK YOU! Font is ok – but feel free to change however you want...I'm not married to it!

Comment [ALP2]: Were these groups conveners or strictly providers in attendance at other forums? I know that Charlotte did not send them to us yet, but I would like to mention their involvement here if appropriate. Just got them in the mail – looks like all providers – but I'm not going to analyze until later.

Comment [ep3]: Was it indeed posted on the website? Not sure the surveys were, but the forum schedules were. It looks like the WA Learns site has the regulator survey, not the QRIS Survey

(i.e., disparities); training; loss of child focus; bureaucracy; assessment process issues; definition of quality; and lack of impact on unlicensed care emerged as themes.

In response to the third question, providers were asked, “***What supports are needed to improve the quality of your program?***” The **10** themes that emerged echoed themes present in the first two questions; no new themes surfaced.

Overall

In general, across all surveys reviewed to date, three main findings were present. *First*, in response to the first question, providers most frequently identified improving the quality of care (e.g., better standards, individualized care for children, more accredited programs) as the way in which QRIS could help them *improve the quality of care* they provide. *Second*, among concerns and fears that providers identified, assessment process issues were mentioned most frequently. *Finally*, when asked what supports were necessary to improve the quality of care in their programs, providers responded most frequently that funding was essential for the QRIS to work for them and for the children in their care.

Centers

“Top three” responses to each question

improvement

- supports (e.g., incentives, financial support, mentoring, information)
- training
- improving the overall quality of care

concerns and fears

- costs;
- unfair/inconsistent delivery/more disparities;
- assessment process issues.

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necessary supports to improve quality of care:

- funding;
- training and professional development;
- supports (e.g., mentoring, information).

Family Child Care Homes

(Top 3 responses to each question)

improve the quality of care family providers deliver

- (1) improve the quality of care;
- (2) support for staff (e.g., mentoring, training and education scholarships). Three responses were more frequently identified than other themes in response to the question regarding

Concerns and fears:

- assessment process issues;
- a loss of child focus (e.g., too much paperwork resulting in less time for children); and

- training (e.g., capacity in remote locations and relevancy of specific care environments and cultures).

Necessary supports to improve quality:

- funding (e.g., program requirements, training, subsidies);
- training and professional development(e.g., accessible, affordable, local, high quality trainers and material);
- supports (e.g., peer mentoring, teaching tools, specific, reachable goals and standards).

Implications

Overall, providers who completed these surveys demonstrate: (1) a desire to improve the quality of care; (2) concerns about how such improvement will be measured; and (3) beliefs that adequate and ongoing financial support will be critical to provider buy-in, feasibility, and the overall success of the entire QRIS system.

Between groups. Subtle differences emerged between center care and family home providers. However, the majority of key themes were similar, and this is particularly true for assessment concerns. What was surprisingly common between both groups was the order of importance (per reporting frequency) regarding what supports were essential for QRIS to be a success. **Providers say that financial support is first and foremost as the foundation, and that this support should be followed by strong training and professional development support, further buttressed by practical supports** (including help with behavior issues, health check-ups, and background checks).